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Message Text

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67
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 SAM-01 SAJ-01

NIC-01 AID-05 NEA-09 EB-07 /107 W
---------- 039182
R 051620Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7624
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, BR, XF, VT
SUBJECT REPORT ON ALLEGED U.S. EMISSARY TO LATIN AMERICA

REF: STATE 24503 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: CONGEN SAO PAULO REPORTED THAT ARCHDIOCESE EXPRESSED CARDINAL'S REGRET AT JORNAL STORY AND DENIED ITS CONTENTS, WHILE LOCAL JOURNALIST ASSERTED THAT CARDINAL HAD INDEED MADE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM AND CONFIRMED STORY PRIOR TO ITS PUBLICATION. WHATEVER THE FACTS OF HIS REMARKS, HIS CONTRITION SEEMS SINCERE, AND IN MEANTIME STORY APPEARS TO HAVE DIED. END SUMMARY

1. CONGEN SAO PAULO REPORTED THAT "FOLLOWING A LOW-KEY APPROACH ON OUR PART FOR COMMENT AND/OR CLARIFI-CATION FROM THE SAO PAULO ARCHDIOCESAN PRESS OFFICE,

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FATHER LUIZ VIEGAS DE CARVALHO, THE MASS MEDIA

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COORDINATOR FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE, CALLED AT THE
CONGEN JANUARY 28 TO EXPRESS THE CARDINAL'S
REGRETS AT THE APPEARANCE OF THE JORNAL ARTICLE
AND TO DENY ITS CONTENTS. FATHER VIEGAS STATED
THAT THE CARDINAL WANTED HIS GOOD FRIEND, CONSUL
GENERAL CHAPIN, TO KNOW THAT AT NO TIME HAD THE
CARDINAL MADE ANY STATEMENT TO THE PRESS SUCH
AS THAT ATTRIBUTED TO HIM IN THE JORNAL ARTICLE."
THE CONGEN'S REPORT CONTINUED THAT VIEGAS ALSO
SAID HE HAD THAT DAY IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES AND
ON THE CARDINAL'S INSTRUCTIONS, DENIED TO REPORTERS THAT THE
CARDINAL "HAD RECENTLY MET WITH A U.S. EMISSARY SENT BY PRESIDENT
FORD." "HOWEVER, IT WAS TRUE," VIEGAS SAID HE TOLD THE REPORTERS,
"THAT THE AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL IN SAO PAULO HAD
DROPPED BY FOR A PRIVATE CHAT BETWEEN TWO FRIENDS AND
CHRISTIANS EARLIER IN THE MONTH."

2. THE CONGEN COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS: "IT IS APPARENT
THAT FATHER VIEGAS, WHO HAS BEEN IN HIS PRESENT POSITION
ONLY ABOUT SIX MONTHS, HAD NOT BEEN THROUGHLY BRIEFED
BEFORE COMING TO US TO OFFER THE CARDINAL'S DENIAL. HE
DID NOT KNOW, FOR EXAMPLE (UNTIL WE INFORMED HIM YESTER-
DAY), THAT THE SUBJECT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STATEMENT
TO BUSINESS WEEK HAD INDEED BEEN RAISED DURING MR. CHAPIN'S
JANUARY 7 MEETING WITH ARNS, AND MOREOVER THAT IT WAS THE
CARDINAL WHO HAD INITIATED THE SUBJECT ON THAT OCCASION.
WHILE THE TEXT OF THE ORIGINAL JORNAL STORY BEARS SUFFI-
CIENT RESEMBLANCE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CONSUL
GENERAL'S JANUARY 7 CALL ON ARNS TO CAST DOUBTS ON CERTAIN
PORTIONS OF FATHER VIEGAS' EXPLANATION, IT IS APPARENT
THAT THE CARDINAL HAS BEEN EMBARRASSED BY THE PUBLICATION
OF THE JORNAL ARTICLE AND THAT HE DESIRES TO MINIMIZE
WHATEVER DAMAGE, IF ANY, MAY HAVE BEEN DONE TO THE
GOOD RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE ENJOYS WITH THE CONGEN AND
PARTICULARLY WITH MR. CHAPIN. CERTAINLY IT IS DIFFICULT
TO FATHOM WHAT MOTIVE THE CARDINAL COULD HAVE HAD OR
WHAT ADVANTAGE COULD POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN GAINED FROM THE
JORNAL STORY AS WRITTEN".

3. SUBSEQUENTLY CONGEN SAO PAULO REPORTED THAT A LOCAL
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EMPLOYEE WAS TOLD BY A CORRESPONDENT IN SAO PAULO FOR THE
JORNAL DO BRASIL AND OPINIAO THAT ARNS DID RPT DID
MAKE THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM AND CONFIRMED THE
JORNAL STORY "IN ALL ITS DETAILS" PRIOR TO ITS PUBLICATION.

4. CONGEN RIO REPORTED BEING TOLD BY ANOTHER JOURNALIST
THAT THE DIRECTOR OF CRITICA TOLD HIM THAT HE DID NOT
RPT NOT HEAR THE STORY ON VATICAN RADIO, BUT USED VATICAN

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RADIO AS A COVER BECAUSE "NOBODY IN BRASIL LISTENS TO IT."
(IN ADDED FILLIP WHICH WE AND RIO DISCOUNT, CRITICA DIRECTOR
ALLEGEDLY ADDED THT REAL SOURCE OF STORY WAS CHIEF OF
ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF.)

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: ACTUAL GENESIS OF STORY MAY NEVER
BE KNOWN. REGARDING REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO CARDINAL ARNS,
IT SEEMS FAIR TO SURMISE THAT HE SAID SOMETHING, PERHAPS
ILL-ADVISED OR ILL-FORMULATED, WHICH RESULTED IN COVERAGE
HE NEITHER INTENDED NOR WELCOMED. WE TAKE HIS CONTRITION
TO BE SINCERE AND DOUBT THAT ANY GOOD WOULD COME OF ANY
FURTHER ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT FROM HIM OR THE ARCHDIOCESE
EXACTLY WHAT HE REALLY DID SAY. WHILE RADIO VATICAN
RETRACTION COULD HELP TO BURY STORY FOR GOOD, WE NOTE
THAT IN THE MEANTIME IT SEEMS TO HAVE DIED A NATURAL
DEATH. END COMMENT.
CRIMMINS

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